

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response the Office Action dated February 23, 2007.

Applicant respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the following remarks.

Claims 1-13, 14 and 15 are currently pending, with claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 being independent.

Claims 9 and 10 are amended. New claims 14 and 15 are added.

No new matters have been added.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 101

Claims 9 and 10 are rejected under 35 USC § 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 9 and 10 are amended. By the amendment attached hereto, the claimed invention in claims 9 and 10 are directed to statutory subject matter. Therefore, the rejection is now moot and Applicant respectfully requests to withdraw this rejection.

In addition, claims 14 and 15 are added. These claims are directed to statutory subject matter. Therefore this rejection would not apply to these new claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

Claims 1-2 and 7-10 are rejected under 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated by *Wright et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,109,107). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Wright discloses several patterns of target sound stimuli and mask sound stimuli. These of many test patterns comprising different combinations of target and mask sound stimuli are used to assess backward masking effects and spectral interference effects in an individual under test (col. 3 lines 29-48).

In contrast, the target sound of the invention of the above identified application is “a Noise-Vocoded Speech Sound signal that is obtained by dividing at least one portion of a sound signal into a frequency band signal and subjecting the frequency band signal to noise” as recited in claims 1 and 2. Accordingly, the target sound is not disclosed in *Wright*.

Additionally, the specification (page 6, lines 4-17) discloses the reason to use a Noise-Vocoded Speech Sound signal as follows:

When a patient was let to hear the Noise-Vocoded Speech Sound that is generated in this manner and recognized words or sentences are examined, then it was found that there are characteristics in the recognition results, depending on the disease of the patient. There are differences in the recognition results between disorders such as cerebral infarction, cerebral hemorrhage, presbycusis, congenital deafness, hearing impairment with independent of the neural disorder. It is estimated that a neural function or a neural site used when hearing and recognizing a sound signal that has been converted to a Noise-Vocoded Speech Sound is different from when hearing and recognizing an ordinary speech sound, so that the recognition results are unique to each disease. By combining the present invention with MR images or the like as necessary, this phenomenon is utilized for highly accurate diagnosis. (Emphasis added.)

None of the references cited by the Examiner teaches or suggests any subject matter that can achieve the advantageous effect in this context.

Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection is improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claims 1 and 2 as discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 2 are allowable over the applied art. **Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.**

Further, claims 7 and 8 are dependent from claim 1, and claims 9 and 10 recite same claim elements in claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that they are allowable for at least the reasons that claim 1 is allowable respectively stated above, and they are further allowable by reason of the limitations set forth therein.

Alternatively, claims 1-2 and 8-10 are rejected under 35 USC § 102 as being anticipated by Sturmer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,303,327). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Sturmer discloses a verbal auditory stimulus to the subject (col. 3 lines 52-54). However, this is also not a Noise Vocoded Speech Sound signal that is obtained by dividing at least one portion of a sound signal into a frequency band signal and subjecting the frequency band signal to noise" as recited in claims 1 and 2.

It is respectfully submitted that the rejection is likewise improper because the applied art fails to teach each and every element of claims 1 and 2 as discussed above. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 and 2 are allowable over the applied art. **Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.**

Claim 8 is dependent from claim 1, and claims 9 and 10 recite same claim elements in claims 1 or 2. It is respectfully submitted that they are allowable for at least the reasons that claim 1 is allowable respectively stated above, and they are further allowable by reason of the limitations set forth therein.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

Claim 4 is rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Wright (U.S. Patent No. 6,109,107) in view of Applicant's admitted prior art. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 4 is dependent from claim 1. It is respectfully submitted that they are allowable for at least the reasons that claim 1 is allowable respectively stated above, and they are further allowable by reason of the additional limitations set forth therein.

Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 USC § 103 as being unpatentable over Sturner (U.S. Patent No. 5,303,327) in view of Applicant's admitted prior art. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 12 and 13 are indirectly dependent from claim 1 or 2. It is respectfully submitted that they are allowable for at least the reasons that claim 1 or 2 is allowable respectively stated above, and they are further allowable by reason of the additional limitations set forth therein.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Applicant believes no fee is due with this response. However, if a fee is due, please charge our Deposit Account No. 18-0013, under Order No. IRD-0006 from which the undersigned is authorized to draw.

If the Examiner has any suggestions for placing this application in even better form, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below.

Dated: September 24, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

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